

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE “ENHANCING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS EDUCATION ACT OF 2008,” H.R. 6104

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Mr. HONDA. Madam Speaker, yesterday I introduced the “Enhancing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Act of 2008,” H.R. 6104. This legislation aims to enhance the coordination of the Nation’s science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education initiatives. Thirty-nine members of the United States House of Representatives signed on as original cosponsors of H.R. 6104. We were joined by our distinguished colleague Senator BARACK OBAMA who introduced a companion bill (S. 3047) along with three of his colleagues.

The intent of this bill is to increase the coordination, collaboration, and coherence of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, STEM, education initiatives for the students of today and the citizens and workers of tomorrow.

As a former teacher, principal and school board member I am committed to improving the education we provide our young people. Developing citizens that are critical thinkers and scientifically literate will help drive a vibrant society and create a sound economy. Our economy depends on our country’s education. Few policy decisions have more economic impact in the long-run than education policies.

Today, more than ever, our economic resiliency depends on the competitiveness of our labor force. Unfortunately, the signs are not good. Over 25 years ago, “A Nation at Risk” identified America’s need to improve STEM education to ensure that we remain competitive in an increasingly global economy. But more than two decades later, “Rising Above the Gathering Storm” presented clear trends in international tests and college enrollments that show that our children are losing their competitive advantage, and so is our Nation.

In this country we have many successful STEM education programs. For example, nearby at the Indian Head Elementary School in Charles County, Maryland, scientists and engineers from the Department of Defense partner with students to develop cutting edge rocketry. Yesterday, two fifth grader students from this school, DeMisha White and Justin Dinch, together with their teacher Mr. Tim Emhoff, shared the incredible value of Federal programs in exciting our children about STEM.

Sadly, this program and the myriad like it are not coordinated. Over a dozen agencies are engaged in STEM education and they are often not aware of the efforts of other agencies—they are working in isolation. According to the American Competitiveness Council, in 2006 the U.S. sponsored 105 STEM education programs at these agencies, at a cost of about \$3.12 billion. The ACC found that “coordination among agencies could be improved to avoid, for example, grants to numerous projects that support the same sorts of interventions . . . there appears to be a lack of communication among the agencies about the work they are funding and the results that are

being generated . . . agencies are often uninformed by the results of earlier projects.” Clearly, our Nation is not maximizing the impact of our STEM education initiatives.

The “Enhancing STEM Education Act of 2008,” is a bi-partisan, bi-cameral bill that will provide a framework for Federal agencies, the States and all stake-holders to work collaboratively. It will help them establish national STEM education goals and to coordinate STEM education initiatives.

The bill has four major components:

(1) Elevating the STEM Education Subcommittee at the President’s Office of Science Technology Policy, OSTP, to the standing committee level. This change would give STEM education a higher profile within OSTP and establish the mechanism for the coordination of Federal STEM education initiatives.

(2) Establishing an Assistant Secretary for STEM Education at the U.S. Department of Education. This Office would bring together the Department’s STEM education efforts and manage programs such as Math and Science Partnerships and the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program.

(3) Creating the State Consortium on STEM Education. This voluntary group, of at least five States from across the country, would help align State STEM education efforts. Their mission is to coordinate policies to address weaknesses in STEM education. For example, the Consortium will work with stakeholders to identify strategies to improve the representation of women and minorities in these fields.

(4) And lastly, this bill establishing the National STEM Education Research Repository. This clearing house will be a portal to information about all federally funded STEM education programs, making the results of the more than \$3 billion the Federal Government spends annually on STEM education available to local educators.

We need to ensure that all our children are prepared for citizenship in a world that is increasingly dependent on STEM literacy. The recent bleak economic news we’ve been hearing should be a wake-up call that we cannot continue to move forward without a blueprint for our students and our future economic well-being. This is why I introduced the “Enhancing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Act of 2008.”

I want to thank all my colleagues who joined with me to address the critical needs of our Nation. I especially want to thank Senator BARACK OBAMA, Chairman GEORGE MILLER, Representative VERNON EHLERS, and Representative RUSH HOLT for their leadership. I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this legislation through this Congress.

HONORING JON KIMBELL

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Jon Kimbell, Artistic Director and Executive Producer of the North Shore Music Theatre (NSMT) in Beverly, Massachusetts, who after twenty-five years is retiring and embarking upon the next stage of his illustrious career in musical theatre.

Jon Kimbell has been at the helm of NSMT for nearly half of its existence. During that

time, he provided the inspiration, experience and leadership that transformed the NSMT from a seasonal summer stock theater to a year round operation. Jon’s energy and enthusiasm were contagious, and in partnership with a dedicated staff and a committed Board of Trustees, Mr. Kimbell oversaw the theatre’s expansion from a \$1 million organization with 7,000 subscribers in 1983 to a \$14 million operation with 20,000 subscribers in 2008.

The North Shore Music Theatre helped make the region north of Boston a major destination in the cultural tourism industry. During Jon’s tenure, NSMT became a nationally-recognized venue, and it has been named the second largest performing arts organization in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by Boston Business Journal. Jon Kimbell and the North Shore Music Theatre are important pistons in the engine of the creative economy that attracts so many to the North Shore—both to live permanently and to visit repeatedly.

For a quarter of a century, Jon was true to the mission of the NSMT, and he worked tirelessly to increase the awareness, significance and celebration of musical theater and the performing arts through superb entertainment and educational programs. Under his tutelage, the North Shore Music Theatre established initiatives that expanded the horizons of countless thousands every year—from special needs populations, to underserved communities, to pre-professionals in training programs, and the theatre supported the development of an inter-generational musical theater program that united senior citizens and elementary school students.

Perhaps one of Jon’s greatest achievements came at the most challenging of times. In the wake of a devastating 2005 fire that nearly destroyed the building, Jon guided the theatre with a firm hand and resolve, and utilizing his ever-resourceful personality and connections, he successfully arranged for NSMT to produce much of its season at the Shubert Theatre in Boston. Jon brought life to the old adage that “The show must go on!” He went on to spearhead a recovery effort that allowed NSMT to reopen a mere 110 days after the fire.

It is appropriate that the House recognize this personal milestone of Jon Kimbell. He has been accorded the accolades and been named recipient of numerous industry awards, and he will be remembered locally for having written and created one of the North Shore’s valued holiday traditions, A Christmas Carol. His contributions to the quality of life for the people of the North Shore and beyond cannot be overestimated and will last into the future. Jon Kimbell was an engaged and contributing member of the North Shore community.

Bravo, Jon Kimbell!

HONORING THE BETTENDORF HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPION BOYS SWIMMING TEAM IN THE 2007-2008 SEASON

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding results achieved by the Bettendorf High School Boys